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Everything must go Fisher House Public Auction

The Fort Lewis Fisher House will conduct a public auction, Saturday, Mar. 3, 1 p.m. Nearly everything in the home will be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Come early to preview the items beginning at 10 a.m., or visit the web site at <http://brian@stokesauctioninc.com>. If you're in the market for living room and bedroom furniture, Armoires, light fixtures, chairs, recliners, art work and more, make sure you attend this event. For more information, please contact Donna Turner at (253) 964-928

Fisher House Closed for Redecorating Thru April

Sharon D. Ayala, MAMC PAO

The Fort Lewis Fisher House will be closed for refurbishing March and April 2001. The last day for check-out is Feb. 28. Families needing temporary lodging during this period should contact the Fort Lewis Lodge at (253) 964-0211, the McChord AFB Evergreen Inn at (800) 847-3899 or local civilian hotels. Both military lodges offer free transportation to and from Madigan Army Medical Center.

Donna Turner, Fisher House manager, stressed that this is only a "temporary" inconvenience for Fisher House guests.

"It's unfortunate that our services will be unavailable during this period, but I want to reassure our guests that this closure is temporary," she said. "When the Fisher House reopens, guests will notice a brighter and more comfortable environment. The entire home will have colors and artwork that represent the beauty of the Pacific Northwest."

The eight-room, Fort Lewis Fisher House opened its doors to military families eight years ago. It is one of twenty-eight Fisher

Houses built by philanthropist Zachary Fisher. The houses serve as a home-away-from-home for military families who have loved ones being cared for at local military or Veterans Affairs hospitals. Most of the families who stay at the local Fisher House come from Madigan Army Medical Center's regional military bases in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska.

During the closure, Turner asked that all donated perishable foods be suspended until April 2001.

Deal: Customer Service Key to Madigan's Success

Sharon D. Ayala, MAMC PAO

As Madigan Army Medical Center prepares for the year 2001, its new commander is laying out plans to ensure the medical center's success in the health care industry.

A native of Nashville, Tenn., COL Virgil T. Deal arrived at Madigan after relinquishing command at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital, Fort Campbell, Ky., in August. He assumed command of

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Deal: Customer Service Key to Madigan's Success Cont'd

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Madigan in October 2000 after BG Mack Hill retired from the Army.

Since his arrival, Deal has had an opportunity to assess the Madigan staff and identify specific areas he will focus on during his tenure as commander.

"Madigan is a unique facility in that it functions not only as a tertiary medical center, but as a primary care center for Fort Lewis' population as well," Deal said. "It's difficult for any staff to be able to respond to those challenges and accomplish those missions. But the ongoing, day-to-day mission of providing great care to patients is what Madigan does very well."

While all military hospitals have similar health care missions, Deal said Madigan's staff is highly effective and very focused about all of its missions, including military readiness. "The Army Medical Department's first priority," stated Deal, "is to support the war-fighter on the battlefield and then at the garrison level. We must provide maneuver unit commanders with a healthy and fit force."

The key, however, to achieving excellence in pursuing that goal, according to Deal, is customer service, "Quality medical care is assumed by our patients to be a given. Madigan consistently goes beyond that," he said.

Customer focus will be put to the test come October when

Medicare-eligible beneficiaries become eligible to enroll in the TRICARE program. This new legislation expands health care benefits for Medicare-eligible military retirees, their spouses and survivors, who are age 65 and older.

While details for executing the program have not yet been determined, Deal made it very clear that Madigan will actively support this program. He also stated that "the past military experiences of this population are a part of who we are. We are anticipating our role in managing the health care of this population," he said.

Also a priority for Deal is the Northwest demonstration project for Region 11. This program is designed to expand the authority of the Northwest Lead Agent, which is now commanded by BG Kenneth Farmer. Previously, the Madigan commander was dual-hatted and assumed this role as well. Consequently, Deal is now able to focus specifically on Madigan related issues. "The goal of the demonstration project," Deal explained, "is to enhance cooperation between Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard medical treatment facilities (MTF) in Region 11, while increasing the overall efficiency of the partnership between the MTFs and the managed care contractor."

Acknowledging that there's still much confusion regarding

the project, Deal said, "Since we are part of the northwest demonstration project and the only region that is being tested at this time, our primary challenge at Madigan will be to maintain what is great about this facility... and that's the customer focus."

As Madigan prepares to embark on another year with the civilian managed care contractor, Deal said he is impressed with the success of this relationship and would like to build on it. "The relationship between Madigan and the civilian contractor is better than any other MTF and managed care contractor partnership anywhere else," Deal said. "It's certainly the oldest and most established contract relationship in the Army Medical Department, but the success goes far beyond the contract maturity. I have visited the TRICARE appointment center and there's certainly a spirit of customer service that you don't find at every managed care organization, which is one of the reasons for the contractor's success."



Babies are Wired for Sound at Naval Hospital

Judith Robertson, PAO, NHB

Children are not usually identified as having hearing loss until they are an age when parents expect they should begin talking. But finding them at two is too late, said Naval Hospital Clinical Audiologist, Jim O'Hara.

When Oregon passed newborn hearing screening legislation in Nov. 1999, officials at the Naval Hospital in Bremerton, Washington decided to re-evaluate the program that had been tried in 1994 and rejected because the technology wasn't up to standards. In Feb. 2000 evaluation of new equipment began by the Audiology, Nursing Service, Otolaryngology, and Pediatrics departments. The process, called Universal Infant Hearing Screening, is now state law in approximately 32 states, and although Washington is not one of them, Naval Hospital, Bremerton put the system in place in Aug., because, as O'Hara said, "We weren't going to wait for a mandate. We wanted to be ahead of the game."

A child begins gaining language skills long before they speak. It is from birth to when they begin verbalizing that children form the basis for speech patterns, by listening to what goes on in the world around them.

"It's that window of time, when babies are developmen-

tally receptive to learning that they really suck up the knowledge," O'Hara said. "So early identification is crucial for a child's development. If a child is deaf or has a severe hearing loss, and is not identified until he or she is two or two-and-a-half, it is significant enough that they may never catch up."

Every baby born at the Naval Hospital receives the hearing screening, and although the



Hours-old Cori Anne Yeung-Montero is connected by electrodes to assess brainwaves that will determine if Cori can hear. Cori's mother is Yin Hing Yeung Montero and father Cesar Yu Montero Jr, assigned to the Camden.

rate of referral is low, and the number of children identified as having diminished hearing ability is even lower after further testing, O'Hara said it is worth the effort.

Capt. Donald Johnson, MC, head of Pediatrics at the Naval Hospital, agrees.

"The real issue is, how do you diagnose hearing. When parents bring their babies in for

the two-week checkup, they are asked, 'does your child hear and does your child see.' These are yes or no questions. And yet having asked the question, we commonly find that a child is 2 and-a-half or 3 years old before anyone diagnoses a problem."

Part of the problem, Johnson said, is that parents may not recognize that the child is not hearing. Or, if the parent does express concern it is often down played by peers, family, or even healthcare providers.

And the consequences could be very significant to the child's development. Infant hearing screening passes the common sense test, Johnson said.

"A child who doesn't hear does not acquire speech, or if they do, it is significantly delayed. If a child

does not speak they can't develop in other ways. Their social interactions will be delayed," Johnson said. "The screening test is passive and safe. It allows those concerned to take the appropriate steps for early intervention, whether that is hearing aids or special tutoring and classes."

"It is new to most of our

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Five MAMC Staff Honored at Armed Forces Section Meeting

LTC Wynona Bice-Stephens, MAMC PAO

Several staff members from Madigan Army Medical Center recently received five of the most prestigious awards given to military medical Obstetric and Gynecology health care providers. The awards were presented at the Armed Forces Section meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, last October.

COL Robert Ricks, chief, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology received the "Professor of the Year," American College of Gynecologists Award, Armed Forces Section. In 1999, the award was won by, Madigan Maternal Fetal Medicine Program Director Air Force LTC Brian Calhoun.

CPT Brian Pierce, a fellow in Maternal-Fetal Medicine, re-

ceived the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists "Armed Forces Section 2000 Fellow's" Award for Best Scientific Paper on Maternal Fetal Medicine. Dr. Lisa Pierce, Director of Surgical Molecular Research, received the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Armed Forces Section "2000 Outstanding Poster" Award for Outstanding Scientific Poster.

Representing the Department of Nursing, LTC Elizabeth Mittelstaedt, chief, Maternal Child Health Nursing section, received the Association of Women's Health of Obstetrical and Neonatal Nursing (AWHONN), Armed Forces Section, "Award of Excellence in Nursing Educa-

tion." 2LT Sharon Simon received the AWHONN, Armed Forces Section, "Army Junior Officer of the Year" and the "Admiral Duerke Award for Research."

The annual meeting, attended by military and civilian physicians and nurses from the Army, Air Force and Navy, allows conference attendees to be updated on the latest information and research findings regarding maternal child health clinical issues. The next conference will be held in Norfolk, Va., October 2001.



Babies are Wired for Sound at Naval Hospital Cont'd

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mothers," said Lt. Deidra Parker, NC, division officer for the Nursery. "It's a non-invasive procedure. We describe how we do the test and some mothers like to come and watch it. It's really an added assessment to assure the parents their baby is OK, that they just didn't think about."

The national average for babies being identified with some degree of hearing loss is between one to six babies out of 1

thousand O'Hara said. "Here in the last two months less than 2 percent were referred to me for re-examination, approximately one to two babies a month."

Of those, O'Hara said, most re-test as normal. But baby fussiness, or wax or vernix (the coating babies are born with), in the ears can skew the outcome.

"It's not a perfect system, but it's very good. It is the gold standard for infant screening at this time," O'Hara said.

Toys for the Pediatric Ward

Judy Paoelli, former Madigan pharmacy technician, donated 40 stuffed animals to the Madigan Red Cross Office, which will be delivered to the children on the Pediatric Ward. "I wanted the kids in the hospital to have these stuffed animals," Paoelli said.

Paoelli won the stuffed animals from a claw machine in a local grocery store. She said she has won about 125 stuffed animals.